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The Character of Rush, an In
to the Course on the Theory a
Practice of Medicine in the Ph
College of Medicine

Philadelphia 1848

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THE

CHARACTER OF RUSH,

AN

INTRODUCTORY

TO THE

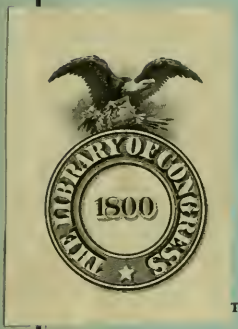
COURSE ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

IN THE

PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE.

BY THOMAS D. MITCHELL, M. D.,

Professor of Theory and Practice in the Philadelphia College of Medicine, and Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in the Medical Department of Transylvania University, in Lexington, Ky.



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PHILADELPHIA:

JOHN H. GIHON, PRINTER,

TH EAST CORNER OF SIXTH AND CHESNUT STREETS.

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Philadelphia College of Medicine, March 22, 1848.

Prof. T. D. Mitchell:

Dear Sir,—At a late meeting of the students under your instruction, the undersigned were appointed a Committee to request, for publication, a copy of your Introductory Lecture.

Very respectfully,

R. J. Kittredge, N. H.
W. G. Lomax, S. C.
L. G. Vinal, Me.
D. Ruggles, Mass.
E. B. Hall, N. J.
T. M. Flint, Pa.
W. G. Hull, Md.
T. Christian, Va.
G. W. Markham, Miss.
T. S. Jones, Ala.
W. C. Webb, Mo.
E. de St.Romes, La.
J. C. Hatheway, B. A.

Committee.

J. C. Calhoun, Jr., S. C., *Chairman.*

N. R. Moseley, Pa., *Secretary.*

To Messrs. Kittredge, Lomax, &c.:

Gentlemen,—The polite request made by yourselves and others, as a Committee from the Medical Class, is cheerfully accorded. The Lecture is at your disposal.

I am very respectfully, &c.,

Thomas D. Mitchell.

Philadelphia, March 24, 1848.

THE CHARACTER OF RUSH.

Delightful, indeed, is the memory of the illustrious dead, whose three-score years and ten have been faithfully devoted to the cause of humanity. And as we love to cast a lingering look upon the western sky, effulgent with the impress of the setting sun, so does it elevate the soul with sentiments of true sublimity to gaze upon the halo of glory that rests upon the tomb of him, who lived, not for himself, but for the world.

The beholder of God's omnipotence as displayed in the wonders of Niagara, in dumb amazement lost, scans the mighty picture; and, for the moment, feels the inspiration of the Deity, who holds the thundering cataract in the hollow of his hand; and sceptic though he be, whispers to himself, "my Father made it all." And he who, for the first time, ploughs the heaving ocean, dashed about in space illimitable, the measureless empyrean above, and all around a waste of waters, fathomless, exclaims, "a God is here." But what are these, in nature's world of wonders, to the climax of Almighty skill, that brought to being man, immortal, intellectual man, the noblest work of God? For him the cataract, the ocean and the world were made, and he invested, by the glorious Architect, with high dominion over all.

The excellent of our race may well command the admiration, love and gratitude of posterity, while time endures. The principles of virtue, unlike the stupendous productions of nature, have a deathless existence that invests them with freshness and vigor, that shall flourish and bloom long after the head and the heart that developed them, shall have mouldered in the dust. Where is the American that feels not the glow of patriotism warming and expanding his bosom, at mention of the name of *Washington;* and when think you

will the day dawn in thrice happy America, when it will be otherwise? And whose sympathy, all the world over, is unmoved when the benevolence of *Howard* is the orator's theme?

The profession which you have chosen, gentlemen, has not been deficient in illustrious men, whose genius, talents, professional and moral worth, stand out as bright and splendid incentives to vigorous effort, to reach the hill-top of glory, and to win the verdict of "great and good" from an honest posterity. I come before you to-night, with a feint sketch of such an example, with an imperfect outline of the character of one who has long since paid the debt of nature, but whose excellence lives in the fond remembrance of thousands, and must by necessity live, because in its very essence it is imperishable.

The *Sydenham of America* is the theme for the present hour; and what topic could have been selected more befitting this occasion, than the character of him, who has with great propriety been proclaimed "the father of American medicine?" That he was a member of the first faculty that gave public lectures on the various branches of medical science, in these United States, is part of our country's history; and that his oral and printed disquisitions gave a new impetus and tone to the profession, is equally undeniable. Is it enthusiasm to feel a national as well as a state and a city pride, in reference to such a man? Be it so. It is not only pardonable to love the name and to cherish the memory of one whose virtues have inspired our veneration, but it is praiseworthy to cultivate such feelings. Born almost within hearing distance of the spot on which Doctor Rush resided during a large portion of his life, and intimately acquainted with his personal worth, his private and public character, for many years, I claim to know a little more of this great man, than some who have presumed to judge him on hearsay evidence, or from a casual and imperfect survey of his deportment. That he had faults, is only to affirm his descent from our fallen progenitor, and that in despite of the illustrious qualities that will cluster around his name to the end of time, he was but a man. Yet his very failings often served by the power of contrast, to add

greater lustre to his intrinsic worth. No splendid heraldry, nor potent charm of wealth, prepared his way. Apart from all extraneous influence, that oft supplies the place of mind, he rose like the towering pyramids of Egypt, so high above the pebbles at his feet, as to inspire an almost reverential awe, that hid his foibles, with its kindly mantle, from the gaze of men. And although a deep-wrought consciousness of his surpassing excellence could not turn back the shafts of envy that were directed against him, even his enemies were compelled to acknowledge his superiority. And at this day where is the individual who ventures to amplify the faults of the venerable Rush? If there be such an one in this goodly land, he must be sought among the few who were stamped by that master spirit with the epithet "ungrateful pupils;" some poor, worn-out, withered remnant of a man, shorn of every thing that appertains to the loveliness of humanity, scathed by the blighting blast of public indignation, an outcast, lonely, powerless: whose jaundiced eye fails to discern in all the moral and intellectual horizon around him a single spot, untinged with his own characteristic dye.

Yet Rush had his failings. He was a splendid mass of precious metal, with here and there a superficial speck, which by contrast gave beauty to the whole; but which, as it rolled down the hill of time, grew brighter and more bright by ceaseless attrition, till at length every blemish has been well nigh effaced, and the delighted beholder now gazes, with unmingled satisfaction, on the almost pure, unsullied gold. Illustrious man! had he lived in the days of the heathen philosophy, he would have been deified for his virtues, and his monument would have honored some conspicuous niche in an idol temple. But he terminated his career of mortality in a civilized land, and to this hour, no fitting monument commemorates his worth, or bears records of his talents. Yet these shall not be forgotten. In the hearts of his pupils, a monument has been erected purer and more lasting than the virgin marble, and the fire that glowed on the altar of their affections has warmed and

animated their sons, and diffused its genial influence wherever the science of medicine has been cultivated.

It is not to be inferred from what has been said, nor from any thing yet to be uttered, that the speaker endorses all the sentiments of Dr. Rush. He scorns a blind adhesion to any man or to any system, yet he feels entirely free to gather instruction from every available source, in order to impress the pupil with just ideas of the magnitude of the profession in which he has embarked. Nor is it any part of the present effort to attempt the analysis of what has been called "the system of Rush." To make such a use of his interesting character, as may prompt the student to a virtuous ambition to serve his country and promote the happiness of society, as well as to advance the interests of the profession, is the full scope of my present purpose.

In the further prosecution of the pleasing task before me, I shall endeavor to exhibit the venerable Rush, as concisely as I can, in the following aspects, viz.: As a man of science; as a patriot and citizen; as a writer; as a teacher; as a friend of virtue, religion and good order; as a practitioner of medicine; and lastly, as a pattern for candidates for the medical profession.

In noticing Dr. Rush, *as a man of science*, I may refer, with great propriety, to the early history of the parent school of medicine in America, in which he was the first teacher of Chemistry. At the time of his selection for that important post, he was in Edinburg, whither he had repaired to complete his medical education; and such men as Morgan, and Shippen, and Kuhn, at whose instance he was chosen, were too competent to judge of qualification, to commit a mistake in a matter so important to their novel enterprise. They knew their man; and hence we find in the papers of the day, an imposing announcement of the arrival in this country of the new Professor, and the apparatus procured by him for the use of the College. I have examined with considerable care, a manuscript copy of the course of chemistry, given by Dr. Rush, while he filled that department, and am satisfied that he did the subject ample justice.

The early predilection of Rush for chemical science seems to have impressed his mind, most deeply, with the important bearing of that science on the theory and practice of medicine; and hence it occurred, that in all his chemical references while Professor of the Institutes and Practice, he was uniformly correct, according to the existing state of the science. Not long before his decease, the revolution effected by the introduction of the chloridic theory and the experiments with the new metals, was claiming the attention of our scientific men; and failed not to rouse the enthusiasm of Rush, who evinced a deep interest in the all absorbing topics.

But I may, with great propriety, refer you to all the writings of this distinguished man, and especially to his volume of *Moral and Philosophical Essays*, for proof of his love and zeal for science. He carried those qualities wherever he went, and laid under contribution, every body and every thing, to yield some additional item of useful information. To indolence, both mental and physical, he was a stranger: but, like the untiring bee that gathers honey from every variety of flower, he culled something valuable from sources the most insignificant and unpromising. Hence it was, that he became so well versed in the science of human nature, and so perfectly understood the springs and secret workings of the human heart.

The admirable essay on the *Education proper in a Republic*, shows most abundantly, that its author possessed, not only much scientific knowledge, but that he was ardently desirous to have all the youth in the land instructed, at an early period, in mathematics, natural history and chemistry. In one of his introductory lectures, he expressed a hope, that the time would soon arrive, when the elementary principles of medical science, to a certain extent, should enter into all our systems of public education. As additional evidence of the love of science that actuated the subject of these remarks, it is proper to say, that in a very important sense, he was the founder and father of Dickinson College, in this state; that by his influence mainly, if not exclusively, the distinguished Dr. Nesbit left Scotland, to become its President.

But what shall we say of Dr. Rush as a *patriot* and *citizen?* This enlightened audience would smile, perhaps, if I were to tell them, that he was among the earliest advocates of American Independence, for almost every school-boy has heard of this. Who among you has not beheld his signature on the immortal document that first proclaimed the disenthralment of the colonies from despotic vassalage? Facts like these need no interpreter, no commentator. They tell their import to the world, and will do so while time shall endure. The man who loves his country for its civil and religious liberties, and who is ready at any hour to sacrifice life and property and character to perpetuate the boon, is indeed a patriot, and such an one, too, as the eye seldom rests upon in these days of onward march and improvement. We are most truly a patriotic people, if love of office and fondness for the loaves and fishes are to be the measure of our patriotism. But when a disinterestedness that perils life and all that man presses to his heart as dearer than life, is to be the test of patriot zeal and fidelity, alas! how many are there who if weighed in the balances would be found wanting!

The purity of Rush's patriotism is apparent, not merely from the relative position and strength of the colonies and the mother country, but also from the fact that his situation as a public teacher, and his engagements as a physician presented an adequate plea for declining to take an active part in the difficulties which then blackened our country's horizon. But he was impelled by motives of the most exalted nobility. He felt that commanding talents were needful in the councils of the nation, at such a momentous crisis; and therefore he was not listless to the call of his country, but hastened to her rescue, at the peril of life, and all the glittering, youth-inspiring prospects that environed his pathway. And who knows but that the towering spirit of Arago and Lamartine that but yesterday burst the fetters of despotism in France, to give unshackled freedom to her impulsive millions, caught the hallowed fire from the altar of American liberty, kindled by the quenchless

ardor of the spirits heaven sent to meet our own tremendous crisis?

Nor was it only while engaged in the fearful struggle that stamped independence on America, that the patriotism of Rush was conspicuous. Trace his career through a long life, even to its last agony, and you behold a devotion to his country's weal, that has seldom, if ever, been surpassed. In 1786, but a very few years after the recognition of our independence, we find him zealously occupied in efforts to strengthen the foundations of that independence and to perpetuate its blessings to the last generation. In the same year, he addressed to the legislature of his own state, his memorable plan for the general diffusion of learning, which led the way for some of the most important educational provisions that have ever been devised or adopted in any country. So valuable and yet concise are his leading arguments in favor of general education, that I venture to quote them here. "Education," says he, "is friendly to religion, inasmuch as it assists in removing prejudice, superstition and enthusiasm; in promoting just notions of Deity, and in enlarging our knowledge of his works. It is favorable to liberty, also, for this can flourish and endure only in the society of knowledge. Without learning, men are incapable of appreciating their rights, as they should, and if learning be confined to the few, liberty can neither be equal nor universal. It promotes just ideas of laws and government. It is friendly to good manners. It promotes agriculture, the great basis of national wealth and happiness. It tends to the improvement of manufactures, which have been multiplied and perfected, in proportion to the cultivation of the arts and sciences."

These and similar declarations which abound in the writings of Dr. Rush, prove, incontrovertibly, that he was incited by the truest, purest patriotism. In truth, his chief aim, in all his essays, seems to have been to perpetuate the blessings of his beloved country: and to do this, by placing them on the most enduring basis, viz.—the virtue and intelligence of the people.

What prompted him, think you, when the entire world was wrapped in a sleep as lethargic as the slumber of the grave, in reference to the ravages of intemperance, to pen that imperishable article on the abuse of ardent spirits, whose electric power rocked the moral frame-work of society to its centre? That paper, merited to be stereotyped in letters of gold and to be imbedded in the vault of heaven, to be illumined by the glittering beams of the glowing firmament, that its pure maxims might be read and known of all the countless millions of earth. It contains all the radical principles of the glorious reformation that has since been achieved; and for this alone, he merits the warmest thanks of his country and of the world. Think you, that he courted popularity in this bold effort, or that he feared the frowns and sneers of an indignant public? Why, sirs, the act was an open defiance of popular sentiment, and a deep-toned denunciation of the fashionable vice of the day. He knew all this, and he felt it too, and if any can deduce from that heroic effort the feintest evidence that it was not inspired by the loftiest patriotism and the purest benevolence, I envy not his powers of analysis. Most happy for our country would it be, if the popularity seekers of the present day could be induced to notice this splendid example and attempt its imitation. It was love of country that prompted him, or he had no motive. He saw the black and desolating wand of intemperance waving frightfully over the land, and in the true spirit of patriotism he sounded the alarm. Nor did he sound in vain. The whole country, yea, even the entire civilized earth was roused by his appeal. The danger was measurably realized, and the remedy is at work.

Let us attend for a few moments to the character of Dr. Rush as a *writer*. And here it is well to make a *distinction*, because there is one in fact that constitutes an important *difference*. We mean here, to distinguish between writing as a manual exercise, and writing as a mental effort, and in respect of both we have something to say touching the subject of these remarks. No man abhorred a careless, illegible autograph, more deeply than did Dr. Rush. He was wont to speak of it with

pointed emphasis in his public lectures, nor did he overlook it in his published essays. Such was the importance he attached to a fair and legible hand-writing, that he placed it among the leading items of an education preparatory to the study of medicine. In page 171 of his interesting volume of Introductory Lectures, he has the following pertinent remarks, which commend themselves to every member of our profession:— "Considering how often we are obliged to convey our advice to patients by means of letters, and how many medicines we prescribe in words which are not in common use: remembering, moreover, how injurious a mistake in a single word or letter may be, or even the neglect of our prescriptions from inability to read them, the writing a fair and legible hand should be regarded as part, not only of the learning, but of the *morality* of a physician." There is vastly more of sound philosophy in this short extract, than appears on its surface. The mind of man is reflected on every thing he does and says. It appears in the figure of his house, in the color and fashion of his dress. And think you, that it stands not forth conspicuously in his hand-writing? So dreamed not Lavater, when he recorded the memorable sentiment," he who writes an illegible hand, is rapid, and often impetuous in his judgment."

You have all, gentlemen, I doubt not, marked the fac similie of Dr. Rush's signature on the printed Declaration of Independence. A plainer name is not to be found on that document. And if you examine his letters, even those of his old age, the same distinct and intelligible manner greets the eye.

But if we regard writing as a mental effort, we find in Dr. Rush a model which should ever be present to the physician who desires to accomplish important and lasting results by his pen. Some have wondered that the work *on the Diseases of the Mind*, and the writings generally of Dr. Rush, should be so easily comprehended, not only by physicians, but by reading men in all ranks of society. But, gentlemen, the secret lies just here. Rush wrote for the good of mankind, and not as do many of our profession, for the mere purpose of making a display. Hence he handled his subject in the common sense

style of one who understood his business, and felt that no gaudy trappings nor tinsel gewgaws were required to give force and efficiency to argument. His style was very much the language of Nature, and therefore you find, but seldom, a far-fetched, and almost never, a new coined word in his publications. For this reason his volume of *Essays* and his *Diseases of the Mind* will be read with deep interest long after you and I shall have gone to the grave. Indeed, such is my estimate of the volume of Essays, that I do not believe a much better service could be rendered to the rising generation (except in the circulation of the Bible) than the republication of it, every twenty years, for gratuitous distribution.

The charge of plagiarism has been preferred against Dr. Rush, by more than one individual, yet with less evidence of its truthfulness than would apply to other public teachers. What Professor of medicine ever occupied his desk an hour without involving himself in the charge of plagiarism, for that very performance? But listen to a witness, who yet lives and enjoys the confidence of his brethren, and mark his affirmation in respect of the book on the *Diseases of the Mind*, which some, from lack of common sense, have ventured to denounce as a weak and worthless performance, abounding in plagiarisms. "During my casual attendance on the lectures of the late Professor Brown, of Edinburgh," says Dr. Francis, of New York, "my national feelings were highly gratified by hearing the successor of Dugald Stewart affirm, that this work on the diseases of the mind, was full of instruction, and exhibited great originality." It is needless to add, gentlemen, that one such testimonial as this, is of more weight than a thousand frivolous objections raised by inflated vanity and inglorious envy. And yet, we presume to quote the testimony of a distinguished foreigner known to all of you, as editor of the *Encyclopedia Americana*, and who, from the fact of being an alien, must be regarded as free from all the prejudices that have agitated the medical mind of our country. Dr. Lieber thus speaks of Rush: "From the result of his individual experience and observation, he established more principles, and added more facts to the

science of medicine than all who preceded him in his native country."

We are in the next place to look at Dr. Rush, as a *Teacher* or *Professor*.

In a former part of this address, reference was made to the ability with which Dr. Rush discharged his duty as Professor of Chemistry in the first medical school in this country. His success in that department established his reputation as a popular instructor, as one apt to teach. The latter quality is indispensable. A man may be profoundly learned, and be destitute of the power of imparting knowledge to others. One of the feeblest teachers I have ever known enjoyed the reputation of very extensive acquaintance with general science and with his own department in particular. But such was the opacity of his mind, such the deranged condition of his materials, that all his efforts to teach, served only to make "confusion worse confounded." Two features, at least, are essential to the character of a good teacher. The first is a due acquaintance with the subject; the second is an aptness to impart that knowledge to others. It was the felicitous union of these qualities that constituted Dr. Rush one of the most pleasing and intelligent lecturers that ever adorned a medical school, and that led to his transfer to the important chair which he filled with such distinguished ability, to the end of his life.

Of Dr. Rush's manner of lecturing, it is impossible to convey an adequate idea. His voice was one of sweetest euphony, adapting itself most easily to the variety of sentiment that presented, and eminently calculated to rivet the attention of his class. Although he read almost every word, and occupied the sitting posture throughout his course, with only now and then an exception, he was unquestionably the most eloquent and instructive teacher I have ever heard. When he desired to give peculiar and unwonted emphasis and power to something he regarded as specially important, he rose from his chair, and with inexpressible dignity, pronounced the sentiment. Well do I remember, when he was portraying in vivid colors

the vast importance of just principles in medicine, the electric flash that flitted through the class, on this change of position. Rising from his chair, throwing back his spectacles, and elevating his right hand, he exclaimed, with a pathos never to be forgotten, "If my grave may be honored with a column to tell the spot where my dust reposes, I ask no better epitaph than this, 'he lived and died an advocate for principles in medicine.'"

There has never lived a physician who contended more earnestly for the necessity and usefulness of principles in medicine, than Dr. Rush. He has been stigmatized as a theorist. But pray, what is a theorist, but one who thinks? And where is the practitioner, be he invested with the doctorate or professorate, or degraded to the level of nostrum-monger, who does not theorise, in some sense or other, touching the efficiency of remedies? The facts of medicine are indescribably important, but their value is wholly dependent on their connexion with theory or principles. The most experienced grandmother in America, whose reputation for the cure of infantile diseases with bitter herbs, is so frequently lauded, is as certainly a theorist as the most renowned system maker in medicine that ever lived. Naked facts are but the skeleton of the animal, which remains passive and inanimate, except as it is vitalised and moved, by the all-potent influence of principles, which constitute the muscle, nerve and vascular system of the fabric. Of what avail are insulated or collected facts to the mariner, aside from the science, the theory, the principles based on the discovery of the compass? And what but the wise adaptation of principles to facts, has brought the old and new worlds, as well as the remotest spots in our own country, almost to juxta position, through the instrumentality of the steam-ship and the lightning flash of the telegraph?

I verily believe that no man has done half so much to establish the just relation between principles and experience, as Dr. Rush. And although many of his views in relation to this cardinal topic have been ridiculed by men of various caliber, in this country and in Europe, I can point you, and shall do it in my course of lectures, to facts proving incontestibly the

adoption of those identical views by some of the most eminent physicians of Great Britain, among whom I name Elliotson, Stokes, and Graves. In this connexion, allow me to commend to your careful perusal, the introductory lecture of Dr. Rush, delivered in November, 1791, on the *necessary connexion between observation and reasoning in medicine;* and as you read it, forget, for a moment, that it was written nearly sixty years ago, and you will be very apt to regard it as a masterpiece of some towering intellect of the nineteenth century. It teaches most truly, that correct practice is not necessarily dependent on mere locality, nor on facts accumulated by long experience, but that sound principles are absolutely indispensable to rational and successful practice.

But as a teacher of medicine, Dr. Rush, more than any who had preceded him, felt and acted under the inspiration of the spirit of improvement. He was not one of your *in statu quo* men, but in the phraseology of the West, he *believed in going ahead.* As evidence of the zeal with which he inculcated this feeling, I quote the closing paragraphs of his lecture *on the causes which have retarded the progress of medicine,* written forty-five years ago: "If I have not removed any part of the rubbish which surrounded the fabric of our science, nor suggested any thing better in its place, I feel a consolation in believing, that I have taught many of your predecessors to do both, by exciting in them a spirit of inquiry, and a disposition to controvert old and doubtful opinions by the test of experiment. I have only to request you to imitate their example. Think, read and observe. Observe, read and think for yourselves." And be it known to every pupil of the Philadelphia College of Medicine, that the same free, untrammelled spirit of inquiry reigns here. We beg of you, not to receive implicitly as true, any doctrine we may inculcate, merely on our authority. We aim at imparting truth and only truth, and yet we may err. Nothing short of a scrupulous examination of every position, can justify you in giving it a place in your medical creed. While we cherish *virtue,* as first and fairest of the trio, that stamps with imperishable glory the proud flag of our country,

we must not forget, that *independence*, though last, is not least in the motto, that waves in triumph in the home of the brave and the land of the free.

That Dr. Rush was not so immovably wedded to favorite notions as some have asserted, is obvious from the well known fact in his history, touching the yellow fever, that formerly desolated this beautiful city. He was once known as the fearless advocate of the doctrine of contagion, and at a period when that view was generally prevalent. But a more extended acquaintance with facts, and a more philosophical apprehension of the essential nature of the disease, forced him from his position; and in the face of a large majority of the profession, he felt it his duty to contend for the doctrine of non-contagion. For this change of opinion, though evidently based on a deep and well-grounded conviction, he was compelled to meet the sneers and neglect of many of his brethren, added to which was a very undesirable share of public indignation.

The public teaching of Dr. Rush was not circumscribed by the confines of the science of medicine. He availed himself of every suitable occasion to urge the importance of virtuous habits, of good morals, of gentlemanly demeanor, of temperance, and all the qualities calculated to enhance a physician's usefulness in society. Who ever heard from his lips the vulgar jest, the indecent allusion, the profane sneer? Not one, of all the thousands who ever sat within the sound of his voice. Had he been an infidel at heart, as some have falsely insinuated, he was too polite, too well indoctrinated in the principles of common sense and too sensitive himself, to permit an allusion to drop from his desk, that might pollute and vitiate the moral sense. Alas, that his mantle did not rest on all his pupils!

It was the decided sentiment of Dr. Rush, that the period of pupilage was, for the most part, too limited; that the welfare of the profession, the elevation of its character, and the good of the community, demanded that students should attend three full courses of lectures, paying, however, for no more than two. In accordance with this opinion, was his advice publicly and privately given in my hearing, time and again. And, when a

candidate, not recognised by him because concealed in the green-box, met his interrogatories with special promptness, thereby making the impression of a clear and full understanding of the subject, he would inquire, "Sir, are you not a three course student?" and on hearing an affirmative response, his deep-felt gratification was evinced in the warm-hearted strains of approbation that followed. As a teacher, he cherished the very natural desire, that his labors might educe the best possible results. Hence his anxiety to prolong the course of study, that what the student attempted to learn, might be acquired in the most perfect manner. And who that looks abroad into the profession at this day, does not perceive the increasing necessity for a revival of the sentiments of the lamented Rush, in reference to medical education?

It would be a difficult task, to point out the principal sources of the success and popularity of Rush as a *teacher*. It could not be found, simply, in the instruction imparted, though valuable beyond price, and clothed as it ever was with the most bewitching eloquence. The sprightly sallies of his vivid imagination, his pleasing and instructive anecdotes, the candor and integrity that were constantly apparent, all these were insufficient to solve the enigma. What then, you inquire, gentlemen, what was the secret? I answer, that language cannot give a satisfactory response. There was a sort of magic influence about the man; a something in every look and word and thought, that enlivened, warmed and even electrified. It was next to impossible to be passive under his instructions; and I risk nothing in affirming, that no teacher ever had the thinking powers of his hearers more absolutely within his grasp. Pupils were compelled to meditate, reason and judge for themselves, and the habit thus formed by daily practice for several consecutive months, may serve to explain the fact, that in no similar portion of our country's history was so much useful and original matter issued from the press, as during the last twenty years of the life of Dr. Rush. At no period before nor since, were experimental essays exhibited by candidates for the doctorate, to such an extent, as during

the memorable era, in which the school enjoyed the labors of this excellent teacher.

But, I name as an important item, in attempting to account for the commanding influence of Rush over the minds of his pupils, the well known fact, that they loved him even to veneration. There may have been exceptions, yet for the most part, he was regarded with an attachment, almost more than parental. They believed his statements to be true, because they were conscious that he could not descend so low as to deceive intentionally. He scorned to practice deception. His soul rose above such pusilanimity. He felt too tenderly the pressure of responsibility that rested on him, thus to trifle, not only with his pupils, but with the untold thousands to be entrusted to their care.

I am next to exhibit Dr. Rush, as a friend of *virtue, religion* and *good order.* And here, gentlemen, I might rest contented with reference to the bare eulogy pronounced by the late Dr. Ramsay, of South Carolina, on this star of the new world. This able writer has depicted, in glowing colors, the habitual, practical piety of the subject of his eulogy; his familiar and conversant reference to the holy scriptures; his conspicuous, every-day love of religion, and his unsullied practice of the christian virtues. "It would seem," says Ramsay, "as though he had been trained, in early life, for both worlds." And yet, there were not wanting those who endeavored to sully the enviable fame of this good man, by asserting that he was not a christian. That is a point, however, not to be settled here. It is for a higher tribunal than this earth can erect, to decide such grave matters. But, if we may lawfully judge of the tree by its fruit, and if the habitual exercise of the noblest virtues may be regarded as a faithful index of the state of the heart and affections, we shall despair of finding a specimen of practical christianity, if we cannot educe it from the character of Rush.

It was well known in Philadelphia, that Dr. Rush more frequently attended public worship, than, perhaps, any other physician; and that, too, long after it was at all necessary to resort to stratagem or trick, to secure popular favor, and thus

to increase business. He held a seat in several churches at the same time, so that when prevented from attendance at the place for which he had a preference, he might drop in at another, and thus, by his presence and example, evince his regard for religious institutions.

But the love of *order*, for which Dr. Rush was so remarkable, must not be overlooked. So high a place did it hold in his estimation, that it grew, almost, to a passion. It was seen in his person, his dress, the humble vehicle in which he made his visits of mercy, his form of writing prescriptions, his office, his library, and every thing about or belonging to him. It was obvious too, in the pointed severity with which he rebuked the disorder so prevalent in the shops of medical practitioners. "When I visit a physician's office," said he, "and find every thing out of place, pill boxes and bottles, books and papers lying pell mell together, I am compelled to infer the confusion and disarrangement of the owner's mind." And who, gentlemen, can fail to perceive the fitness of the inference?

But what shall I say of the *punctuality* of Dr. Rush? In one of his valedictories to a class of medical graduates, he introduces a noble statesman of England, who had so high a sense of the moral obligation of *punctuality*, that he once said, "had I agreed to meet one of the poorest of my tenants, at a fixed moment, in a remote corner of my woodlands, only for the purpose of playing at push-pin, no consideration could induce me to disappoint him." Nor was Dr. Rush less punctilious in more important matters. I heard him deliver three courses of lectures, the last of which was in his sixty-eighth year, and I never knew him to vary five minutes from the regular hour, for appearing at his desk. Indeed, he rarely failed a single minute. He held that the *good* effects of punctuality made it a *virtue;* while the neglect or disregard of it, was followed with the consequences of a *vice*. In his consultations, he was noted for most scrupulous exactness; and Professor Francis affirms, in his eulogy, "that in thirty years of service as physician to the Pennsylvania Hospital, he was never known to vary two minutes, from the fixed hour of at-

tendance." "His *punctuality*," says Professor Francis, "added to a judicious arrangement of time for multifarious occupations, secured to him leisure enough for the publication of those works which have given celebrity to his name, and to the school of which he was so distinguished an ornament."

Of Dr. Rush, as a *medical practitioner*. Did time permit, I could not more satisfactorily exhibit the character of Dr. Rush, as a practitioner of the healing art, than by reading a paper, entitled, "*A narrative of the state of body and mind of the author, during the prevalence of the yellow fever of* 1793, *in Philadelphia.*" Let me entreat you to peruse that unique document, as you will find it in volume third of his Medical Inquiries, at page 300. It is an epitome of the entire character of its great author, and is alone sufficient to perpetuate his memory to the latest generation. Its conclusion is so full of that humility which is above all price, that I quote it in his own words, to show the feelings of his heart, in view of the terrible pestilence through which he had passed, with comparative safety. "But wherewithal," says the venerable writer, "shall I come before the great Father and Redeemer of men, and what shall I render to him for the issue of my life; from the grave?"

"Here, all language fails;
Come, then, expressive silence, muse his praise."

That Dr. Rush had enemies, in the profession, as well as out of it, especially during the prevalence of the epidemic already noticed, is well known. This unhappy contingency was, perhaps, unavoidable. He was, pre-eminently, a reflecting man; he could not, and would not abandon principles, in the hurry of business. It was, therefore, impossible, as he has remarked in one of his papers, to consult with every practioner around him, to advantage. He knew that the dissimilarity of views was so great, that there could be no useful approximation, and hence it happened that he frequently declined to hold consultations with certain members of the profession, of most respectable standing. Hence the jealousy and envy and hostility that pursued him in some instances, with a

zeal worthy of a better cause, and which, at the time of his death, had a party in the city of Philadelphia.

In the sick chamber, the loveliness of the character of Rush found its climax. It was there that the golden chain of attachment was forged, that seemed to be stronger than death. He was kindness, gentleness and affection personified; and with these he won the confidence and love and gratitude of the thousands who were the spontaneous champions of his character and fame, while living; who wept in crowds at his bier when dead, and followed in the sorrowing multitude that bore his remains to the narrow house with aching hearts and weeping eyes, that spoke his worth in the expressive accents of unutterable grief.

Like Boerhaave of old, his American archœtype appropriated with sacred care, the avails of his Sabbath day's services, to the cause of the poor and needy. And in addition, he visited thousands who could not possibly remunerate him, not only during the prevalence of a desolating epidemic, but at all times. Had he pursued his profession, simply for the sake of amassing a fortune, he had ample opportunity for becoming immensely rich. And yet, notwithstanding the extent of his practice and the frugality of his mode of living, and the general good management of his domestic concerns, he left behind him but little more than enough to enable his family to maintain their usual position in the community. He did not die in the strict and techical sense of the term, a *wealthy* man. But he died full of honors and left to his family, to his country, and to the be world, a character and a fame, more to valued thang old; yea so precious that worlds are too poor to purchase it.

Finally, I am to speak of Dr. Rush, *as a pattern for candidates for the medical profession.* This, gentlemen, you will perceive to be the practical application of all that has been said. The premises have been stated and lllustrated, mainly in reference to the inferential bearing of the whole on those who are about to become constituent parts of the profession. With feeble powers, indeed, has the picture been drawn, but I trust that the resemblance to the original has been sufficiently

striking to awaken in your bosoms, that cordial esteem which is due to the great and the good.

There is one important feature in the character of Dr. Rush, that should never be forgotten. To him, every place was a school, every one with whom he conversed, was in some way or other, a source of instruction. Never was he without a book, at home or abroad: for when the printed or the written volume was not at hand, he gazed on the wide-spread book of nature, with delight and profit, looking through nature up to nature's God.

I would stimulate the youngest of my audience to industry and perseverance, by a simple reference to the facts, that ere he attained his fifteenth year, the indefatigable Rush was a graduate of Princeton College in New Jersey; that the following six years of his career were devoted to the study of medicine in this country, during which period, he translated the Aphorisms of Hippocrates, and began to keep a note book of remarkable occurrences, which he continued to the end of his life; and that from this record has been obtained the only authentic account of the yellow fever that first appeared in Philadelphia, in 1762, at which time he was scarcely seventeen years of age; that after all these efforts, he spent two years in Edinburg in most laborious study, and took his medical degree in that city, in 1768.

Such was the foundation on which the fair and splendid superstructure, of which I have exhibited a very imperfect outline, rose to its lofty height. I love to ponder on the character of such a man, to cherish every reminiscence of his worth, and to hold up the *beau ideal* of moral, intellectual and professional greatness, for the imitation of all posterity.

> "Long, long may the heart with such mem'ries be fill'd,
> Like the vase from which roses have oft been distill'd;
> You may break into pieces the vase, if you will,
> But the scent of the roses will cling to it still."

Would you lay a foundation in early life, for fortune and substantial greatness, take for your pattern the prince of American physicians. Follow his example, as students enlisted for life,

in the cause of medical science. Would you be respected and loved by a nation, and have your name to go down to posterity, with the blessings of thousands resting upon you, imitate the virtues, the purity of character, that have crowned him with ever during honors.

Gentlemen, I have discharged my duty. I have placed before you, one of the most perfect characters, ever known in our profession. I have fondly hoped, that the charms of moral and professional excellence would win your love, and stimulate you to tread in his footsteps. Nor will I entertain a doubt that you will fail to estimate the obligations that press upon you, to keep steadily in view, the high, the glorious standard that has this night been erected before you.

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